

02/08/2003

Japan helped country to progress, says Dr Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Expressing confidence that Malaysia will remain a good friend of Japan even after he steps down, the Prime Minister hoped the Japanese Chamber of Commerce Malaysia (Jactim) would continue assisting Malaysia to be attractive to investors.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad congratulated and thanked Jactim for its role in helping Malaysia's industrialisation process over the last 20 years.

Speaking at a dinner to celebrate Jactim's 20th year anniversary, Dr Mahathir said: "Malaysia knows that much of its industrial development has been due to investment by Japanese manufacturers.

"When many developed countries were doubtful whether Malaysians could work in factories, it was the Japanese investors who came forward and proved that Malaysians were as good as the Japanese in factory work."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had tried to emulate the Japanese industrial policy through its Look East Policy as it was motivated by the brilliant rise of Japanese industry, from the devastation of World War II.

"Malaysia is thankful for the quick response from Japan in answering our needs in making the change from being agriculture-based to industrialisation."

Messages from Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone were also read during the dinner.

In his speech read by Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Tetsuro Yano, Koizumi congratulated Jactim for its efforts to strengthen Malaysia-Japan bilateral ties.

Jactim president Tan Sri Dr Kazumasa Suzuki presented RM100,000 from Jactim Foundation to Bakti (Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers) president Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.